

M493
The man Li-ndang and the woman Ndu-ni-ndang.

Sung by Pan Xie.

This year we may know,
Know that the woman Ndu-ni-ndang had collected bowls of copper and silver,
But the neighbours would borrow,
Borrow the woman Ndu-ni-ndang's bowls of copper and silver to drink wine.

5 The next year the woman Ndu-ni-ndang collected bowls of copper and silver,
And the neighbours would borrow,
Borrow the woman Ndu-ni-ndang's bowls of copper and silver to drink wine.

But the woman Ndu-ni-ndang and the man Li-ndang were unwilling to lend,
And the neighbours brought an accusation,
10 Accusing the woman Ndu-ni-ndang and the man Li-ndang,
Accusing them before the Ruler-king.

So the Ruler-king sent,
Sent his two soldiers marching,
Marching smartly on their way.

15 Then the Ruler-king's two soldiers
Haughtily came seeking,
And seeking, reached the woman Ndu-ni-ndang and the man Li-ndang's house.

The Ruler-kings two soldiers opened,
Opened their mouths, opened their lips and asked,
20 "Where has the man Li-ndang gone?"

The woman Ndu-ni-ndang made reply,
"The sun is shining brightly,
And the man Li-ndang has gone to channel water,
To channel clear water to fertilise the rice fields.

25 So the clear water will flow,
Flow to fertilise the man Li-ndang's ricefields.
Also in the sunshine the man Li-ndang has gone to plough the fields,
To plough the man Li-ndang's rice fields".

The Ruler-king's two soldiers sought,
30 Sought the man Li-ndang and reached the rice fields.
The man Li-ndang opened,
Opened his mouth, opened his lips and spoke,

"Let the Ruler-king's two soldiers wait a little,
While the man Li-ndang looses,
35 Looses the water buffalo's harness and leading rope".

The man Li-ndang slipped them over,

Slipped them down over the water buffalo's back
The man Li-ndang took off the yoke and hung it,
Hung it on the man Li-ndang's plough.

40 With outspread arms the man Li-ndang drove,
Drove the water buffalo to bask in the sun,
To bask on the bank between the man Li-ndang's fields.

The Ruler-king's two soldiers could not arrest him,
But the man Li-ndang, with the Ruler-king's two soldiers,
45 Then returned and reached,
Reached the front of the man Li-ndang's house.

In the front of the man Li-ndang's house,
There was a clump of sheltering bamboo standing.
The man Li-ndang stretched,
50 Stretched out his hand and quickly pulled up,
Pulled up a plant of sheltering bamboo from the ground.

With outspread arms the man Li-ndang broke up,
Broke up the plant of bamboo, smashing it to pieces.
Then the man Li-ndang took,
55 Took the plant of bamboo and set it alight.

Having set the plant of bamboo alight, he made food,
Made it for the Ruler-king's two soldiers to eat.
Then the man Li-ndang spoke,
"Let the Ruler-king's two soldiers go on ahead,
60 The man Li-ndang will follow after".

The man Li-ndang took,
Took the bottom of a flat basket and cut out wings,
And took a hearth brush and made a tail.
Taking the wings the man Li-ndang fixed them to his body,

65 And the man Li-ndang flew whistling up into the sky,
Flew following the Ruler-king's two soldiers.
The man Li-ndang flew whistling and alighted,
Alighted in the courtyard of the Ruler-king.

The man Li-ndang rose quickly and together with,
70 With the Ruler-king discussed and disputed.
The Ruler-king examined him,
Examined him concerning all kinds of things,
Yet the man Li-ndang was not afraid.

The man Li-ndang said,
75 "I only fear the Ruler-king's instrument,
The instrument sawing back and forth right down to the ground".
The Ruler-king puzzled,
For seven years puzzled over it before he thought it out.

80 So the Ruler-king invited,
Invited the Ruling Race's blacksmith,
To forge a saw that would saw straight,
To forge a saw that would saw true.

Then the Ruler-king dispatched,
Dispatched his two soldiers to begin sawing,
85 Sawing up on the high mountain,
Sawing back and forth right down to the ground.

They sawed through the man Li-ndang's liver,
They sawed through the man Li-ndang's heart,
So that the man Li-ndang's flesh decayed,
90 And his blood flowed and drained away.

Yet the man Li-ndang's liver and lungs did not remain infertile.
The man Li-ndang's liver and lungs changed,
Changed into swallows flying about the earth.

In Ox month and Tiger month,
95 The swallows flock together,
And the swallows fly,
Fly from north to south in search of insects to eat.

They fly to the people's warmer lands,
That all the people may know.

100 In Sheep month and Monkey month,
The swallows return
Return from south to north in search of insects to eat,
That all the people may see.

This year we may know,
105 Know that the man Li-ndang being truly dead,
The woman Ndu-ni-ndang was distraught.

The woman Ndu-ni-ndang did no farming,
So that hunger and thirst together reached,
Reached the woman Ndu-ni-ndang alone.

110 This year we may know,
Know that the woman Ndu-ni-ndang has given birth,
Has given birth to two brothers.
The elder was named Ndrao-ghu,
And the younger was named Ndrao-ghv.

115 The seed-bearing bamboo was bearing seed on the bamboo.
So the woman Ndu-ni-ndang spoke,
"Is the seed-bearing bamboo indeed bearing fruit,
And is the seed-bearing bamboo enough to eat to the end of the year?"
(In fact seed-bearing bamboo is only eaten as a pastime!)

120 The seed-bearing bamboo was bearing seed on the bamboo,
The seed-bearing bamboo was indeed bearing,
And the woman Ndu-ni-ndang gathered the seed-bearing bamboo every day,
Gathered the seed-bearing bamboo into a bag.

Then the woman Ndu-ni-ndang returned, came back and reached,
125 Reached the woman Ndu-ni-ndang's house.
The woman Ndu-ni-ndang put,
Put the seed-bearing bamboo into a bowl.

She gave it to Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv to eat,
To eat seed-bearing bamboo from a basin,
130 To eat seed-bearing bamboo from a dish.

The sunshine was shining brightly,
In the sunshine the woman Ndu-ni-ndang saw,
Saw rape plants growing on the riverbank,
And the woman Ndu-ni-ndang stretched and stretched to cut it,
135 To cut the patch of rape on the river bank.

The Yi robbers did no good,
For the Yi robbers came and took
Took the woman Ndu-ni-ndang away.
But the woman Ndu-ni-ndang spoke up,
140 "The Yi robbers are doing no good,
For the woman Ndu-ni-ndang has wrapped,
Wrapped up Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv there upon the bed".
But the Yi robbers would not listen,
They took the woman Ndu-ni-ndang and were gone.

145 After nearly sixteen years,
The Yi robbers took,
Took the woman Ndu-ni-ndang to sell,
To sell at the Ga-dro family's ox market.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv had grown up,
150 But Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv still remembered her.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv were going to market.
On what date was the market held?
It was held on the fifteenth or sixteenth of the month.
Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv took,
155 Took shining silver carried in their belts.

So Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv went to market.
Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv went looking for horses,
But though they looked, there were no horses.
Now Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv met,
160 Met the Yi slave woman in the lower market.

Still looking for horses, they made their way to the upper market.

And though they looked, there were no horses.
But again Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv met,
Met the Yi slave woman in the upper market.

165 The elder brother called,
Called the younger brother back and asked,
“What might we do if we bought the slave woman?”
“We might buy the Yi slave woman to look after the chicken”.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv weighed shining silver,
170 Weighed shining silver in the scales.
They paid out a thousand four hundred and bought her,
Bought the Yi slave woman.

Taking her, they returned, came back and reached,
Reached the place where Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv ate lunch.
175 Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv ate white food from copper bowls,
The Yi slave woman ate coarse food from a leather pouch.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv smoked tobacco using a copper pipe,
The Yi slave woman smoked tobacco using a twisted leaf.
Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv travelled on horseback,
180 While the Yi slave woman went on foot.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv brought the Yi slave woman along,
Brought her along until they reached,
Reached the swampy valley, the valley of small fields.
Reached the place where of old the Yi slave woman used to wash cloth,
185 Reached the place where the Yi slave woman used to soak yarn.

The Yi slave woman wailed,
Wailed lamenting to herself and saying,
“We have reached the place where the Yi slave woman used to wash cloth,
Reached the place where the Yi slave woman used to soak yarn!”

190 Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv did not hear distinctly,
So the elder brother sent the younger brother,
Sent him back to ask,
“What are you wailing for, wailing and lamenting to yourself?”

The slave woman replied,
195 “I am wailing and lamenting to myself because we have reached,
Reached the place where the Yi slave woman used to soak yarn”.

So Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv enquired,
“Are you the woman Ndu-ni ndang who used to be?”
“I am the woman Ndu-ni-ndang who used to be”.

200 Then the Yi slave woman spoke,
“Are you two Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv who used to be?”
“We two are Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv who used to be”.
Then the Yi slave woman, mother and sons wept together.

The elder brother went and held the horse,
205 While the younger brother lifted,
Lifted the woman Ndu-ni-ndang upon its back.
So Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv brought the woman Ndu-ni-ndang,

Bringing her they returned, came back and reached,
Reached Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv’s house.
210 But no one knew the woman Ndu-ni-ndang,
Knew the woman Ndu-ni-ndang with her hair white as wood ash.

The woman Ndu-ni-ndang had reared,
Reared a pair of spotted dogs,
Spotted dogs, which were sound asleep.

215 But the pair of spotted dogs knew,
Knew the woman Ndu-ni-ndang’s voice,
And the dogs barked and jumped about, barking for joy.

The woman Ndu-ni-ndang fed,
Fed a spotted pig which grew bristles,
220 Fed a speckled chicken which grew spurs.

Then the woman Ndu-ni-ndang killed,
Killed the speckled chicken which grew spurs,
And killed the spotted pig which grew bristles,
To call back the spirits for Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv,
225 In fact for all three, mother and sons, to the home.

This is sung that all the old folk may know,
It is sung that every child may recall,
It is sung that all the descendants may remember.

Thus it is ended.